Five Acknowledgement Emails to Aid Your Classy Domination of Nonprofit Stewardship

**Introduction**

Gentlemen know to hold open doors for their dates. Ladies know to keep their elbows off the table. People who want second dates chew with their mouths closed. Good manners might seem like products of habit, but they’re really skills built up over time.

The classic adage about skills is that you never forget how to ride a bike. Likewise, once you’ve consciously practiced good manners, you don’t think about opening doors for people, keeping your elbows off the table, or chewing with your mouth closed. Those are skills that you’ve built over time and now execute flawlessly without a thought.

One good manner that all nonprofits need in their skillsets is the ability to deliver an impactful thank you. Gratefulness helps build donor retention, and the goal is for donors to give again and again and again. However, there’s more than just donations to be grateful for.

Say thank you for:

* Standard donations
* Major gifts
* Participation as a donor during the current year
* Event sign-up
* Event participation

Thank you notes may be sent either by email or direct mail. Email is faster, but direct mail is generally regarded as more intimate. Do what works for your organization, according to your budget and what donors prefer.

There are several reasons to be thankful, and there are commonalities between the differing types of acknowledgement letters.

**Basics for donor acknowledgement letters**

A thank you is a thank you, but you want your acknowledgement letters to stand out like a gentleman among a group of boys who still think it’s appropriate to pick their noses.

While your specific thank you messages should differ from one type of acknowledgement to another, all thank you letters require a few basics. These commonalities are little things, like behaving with good manners, that let your donors know that you truly care.

Acknowledgement letter essentials include:

* Personal address and a personal salutation
* Personal signature (preferably by one or more higher-ups from your organization)
* Contact information for your organization
* Language that specifically addresses the good that your donor has done
* Speak directly to the donor
* No ~~spilling~~ spelling or grammatical errors

Receiving an acknowledgement letter devoid of those elements is like receiving a bouquet of roses without a card. It’s nice, but who sent it? And why? And do they even care or were they merely taking care of a formality?

In addition to your thanks, you owe donors receipts, so they can receive tax breaks for their donations. Not that donors are giving just for tax breaks, but that is a benefit of charitable giving that they deserve. Whether a receipt is in paper form or sent via email does not matter, as the IRS does not designate a specific file type for these receipts.

In order for an acknowledgement letter to serve as a valid receipt, it must include:

* Name of your organization
* Statement that your nonprofit is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization
* Date the donation was received
* Amount of money donated
* Statement that no goods or services were received in exchange for the donation

These rules apply to cash or monetary donations. There are certain statements that must be made for non-cash donations, such as gifts of goods and services, but those types of donations will not be addressed by the acknowledgement letters in this guide. However, this guide still serves as a good guide for how to write acknowledgement letters for such donations.

The following are very vanilla templates on purpose. We want to give you the bones on which to build the vibrant muscles of amazing acknowledgement letters. Feel free to use any and all of these templates, but we encourage you to add your own flair and personality, just as any classy individual does in order to make people feel like something special is going on.

**Standard Acknowledgement Letter**

In basketball, free throws don’t count for as much as three-point shots, but every point matters. At the end of the game, one point might be the difference between victory and defeat. The three-pointers and the free throws both added to the total, which would have been lower without any of those shots.

In fundraising, every donation matters. The little gifts add up, and those donors deserve your thanks just as much as big donors. They’re giving money to help you fight for your mission, and any amount of help is something for which to be thankful.

Moreover, most donors don’t give as much as they could the first time. Retaining donors is key, especially because, over time, they may choose to give more. Cultivating major gifts is a long game, and it’s no secret that the people most likely to become major donors are people who have already been giving to your nonprofit, albeit smaller amounts.

Standard acknowledgement letter template:

Dear [insert donor’s name],

Thank you for your [insert donation amount] donation made on [insert date of the donation] to [insert organization name]. Generous individuals, such as yourself, allow [insert organization name] to [insert organization mission]. Your gift makes a big difference, and we appreciate your thinking of us.

Your support is a big reason why we’ve been able to accomplish the following this year:

* [insert a bulleted list of 3-5 accomplishments from the past year]

So much good, and all because of you! We invite you to follow us on social media [insert social media link(s)], so we can keep you updated about events, campaigns, and volunteer opportunities.

[insert organization name] is a tax-exempt organization according to section 501(c)(3) of the Internal revenue code. No goods or services were provided in exchange for this donation.

Thanks again and stay in touch!

Have a wonderful day,

[insert signature and contact information]

**Major Gift Acknowledgement Letter**

The prototypical NFL quarterback is bigger than most prospects and throws farther, leading the way for his team. The prototypical fundraising prospect gives bigger gifts than most prospects, which takes the nonprofit farther, leading the way for the organization.

Major gift prospects are generally regarded as donors who give between $5,000-$10,000 or more. That’s some major cash that can help any fundraising campaign to achieve its goals.

While one big donation is a lot, don’t think that these donors can’t give that generously again. Once a high level of giving is establish, you want to acquire those donations as often as possible. Acknowledgement letters can help to retain these donors at this high, desired giving level.

Major gift acknowledgement letter template:

Dear [insert donor’s name],

Thank you for your [insert donation amount] donation made on [insert date of the donation] to [insert organization name]. Large gifts, such as yours, allow [insert organization name] to [insert organization mission]. Yours is the gift of exceptional support, and we appreciate your thinking of us.

Your donation is a big reason why we’ve been able to accomplish the following this year:

* [Insert a bulleted list of 3-5 accomplishments from the past year that were made possible specifically by major gifts.]
* [If the gift is large enough then state exactly what this money went towards. Greater specificity means a more personal message, which equates to a more impactful letter.]

So much good, and all because of you! We invite you to follow us on social media [insert social media link(s)], so we can keep you updated about events, campaigns, and volunteer opportunities.

[insert organization name] is a tax-exempt organization according to section 501(c)(3) of the Internal revenue code. No goods or services were provided in exchange for this donation.

Thanks again and stay in touch!

Have a wonderful day,

[insert signature and contact information]

**Year-end Thank You Acknowledgement Letter**

A large part of retaining donors is staying in touch with them. The trick is to not send communications too frequently. You don’t want people to forget about you, but, even if you’re saying thank you, too much outreach can annoy donors.

Look for natural reasons to get in touch with donors. A general rule is that you can send 2-3 communications within 90 days of a donation without coming across as pestering to the donor. However, once that 90-day threshold passes, when can you reach out next?

Natural excuses to reopen a dialogue remove any awkwardness or notions of you forcing yourself upon donors. The fact that today is March 17th and that you want to say thank you because March 17th is your favorite day of the year won’t ring true with donors. However, special occasions are understandable reasons to reach out, and one such special occasion is the end of the year.

An end of year acknowledgement is a thank you, but can also serve as an appeal for future donations. You’re thanking donors, reminding them you exist, and reminding them that more money can always help.

End of year acknowledgement letter template:

Dear [insert donor’s name],

As the end of the year approaches, we want to thank you again for your generous donation to [insert organization name]. Annual donors, such as yourself, allow [insert organization name] to [insert organization mission]. We cannot thank you enough for supporting our cause and electing to become a valued part of our family.

Your donation played a pivotal role in allowing us to accomplish several goals this year:

* [Insert a bulleted list stating 3-5 accomplishments from the past year that were made possible thanks to the success of various fundraising campaigns.]

Giving is a cherished tradition of the holiday season, and we’re so glad that you thought of us this year. Please keep us in mind in the future, as we have many goals to achieve in the new year:

* [Insert a bulleted list of 3-5 goals that will entice donors to want to help more.]

We invite you to connect with us on social media [insert social media link(s)], so we can share news and stay in touch.

Thank you again, and we wish you a happy holiday season and a wonderful new year,

[insert signature and contact information]

**Event Sign-up Acknowledgement Letter**

Acknowledgement letters don’t have to be for donors. People who attend events for your nonprofit, whether to volunteer or for entertainment, deserve praise, too, as these people could always turn into donors. Extending a thank you for getting involved is a great way to subtly open the fundraising door.

Event sign-up acknowledgements differ in an important way from our next topic, which is thanking people for attending an event. Have you ever signed up for a community event and not attended? People have busy lives, and whether it’s because they honestly forget things or end up prioritizing matters, it’s near impossible for anyone to fulfill every commitment.

An event sign-up acknowledgement acts as a reminder for people to actually attend your event. It’s one thing for people to want to get involved with your organization and quite another for them to actually show up. When people do actually participate for an event, they’ll see what you do and you’ll stand a much better chance of delivering the type of emotional impact that leads to a donation.

Additionally, sometimes people require a nice reminder in order to rouse the enthusiasm to show up.

Event sign-up acknowledgement letter template:

Dear [insert sign-up’s name],

Are you getting excited? We’re getting excited. [insert name of event] is almost here, and we can’t wait to [insert the event’s objective]. It’s individuals like you that make working with the local community such a rewarding experience. We can’t wait to have you share in our fun, and we’re grateful for your time and enthusiasm.

As a reminder, you have signed up for:

Event: [insert name of event]

Date: [insert date of event]

Location: [insert location of event]

Time: [insert start and end times for the event]

If you have any questions, please contact us at [insert contact information].

Have a great day,

[insert signature]

**Post-event Acknowledgement Letter**

Post-event acknowledgement is an opportunity to more directly ask for donations. People have now officially gotten involved with your organization, and they may be encouraged to do more. While they might volunteer again, another way for them to do more is by giving a donation.

The great thing about post-event acknowledgements is that they show that you paid attention. You actually kept track of who showed up to your event and extended a special thank you to these people. Paying attention is a form of caring, and if you can do a simple thing like keeping track of who actually shows up to your events, then your reward might be getting paid.

Events can either be volunteer oriented or for community entertainment. Either way, people came out, learned about your organization, and deserve a thank you. It’s your job to be a sly wordsmith and turn these thank you notes into effective fundraising appeals.

Post-event acknowledgement letter template:

Dear [insert attendee’s name],

We’re so glad that you joined us for [insert name of event]. We hope you had a great time and that you’ll attend more [insert organization name] events in the future.

The event was a great success:

* [Insert 3-5 bullet points highlighting the volunteer or community event]

We love engaging with the people in our community, and we’re so glad that you could be part of such a special event. If you’d like to learn more about [insert organization name], please visit us at [insert link to website] or connect with us on social media [insert social media link(s)].

People like you make it possible for us to host events and enrich the community. We invite you to make a donation to ensure our continued success at achieving [insert organization’s mission].

Again, we’re so glad that you could join us and we hope to see you again in the future.

Have a wonderful day,

[insert signature and contact information]

**Want to learn more about Nonprofit Easy?**

If you found these email templates helpful and want to learn more about our CRM and fundraising software, then check us out at:

**http://www.nonprofiteasy.com/**

And thank you, of course, for downloading our guide and becoming a part of the Nonprofit Easy community.